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**PROFESSOR E. R. HOLME.**

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ON Tuesday, March 18th, Professor E. R. Holme retired from the McCaughey Chair of English Language in the University of Sydney. Many tributes have been paid to him personally and to his work as scholar, teacher and leader in the development of the University and University activities of all kinds. Those who have enjoyed the privilege of personal acquaintance with him, know him for a man who dislikes being thanked and who prefers to do good works without advertisement and without acknowledgement. But the members of the Australian English Association would like to take the occasion to offer him their personal respects and good wishes, and to acknowledge gratefully the debt of the Association to his constant readiness to give it of his time, energy and support. In a very real sense the Association owes its foundation to his foresight and work in its organisation and the definition of its aims and activity. The Association enjoyed, perhaps, its most flourishing period in the days of his active participation in its work, but it has always been able to rely upon his help and support. For many years he has been a Patron of the Association, and that warrant of his interest in its work would have been sufficient. He has given, however, not as convention suggested, but as his own generous nature dictated.

The members of the Association take this opportunity of offering him their respect and their good wishes for the long and happy retirement which his merits and achievements have earned him.

### BE GLAD IN THE GRASS.

---

Be glad in the grass,  
 In the weeds that run,  
 Be glad for the shade  
 Implicit in sun.

Give thanks to the thorn  
 That fosters the rose,  
 For rapture that comes,  
 And, sorrow that goes.

"E."

## DON'T TELEPHONE.

---

By "HAYWIRE".

---

His wife was there when Jeanette rang. He had told her not to ring, though he had forgotten to mention his wife. There must be something wrong.

'Yes?'

'Hullo! Could I speak to Mr. Javelin, please?'

'Speaking.'

'Oh Frank! I'm sorry, darling. I *had* to ring you. I know you told me not to. It's terribly important. I have to see you. I couldn't get in touch with you any other way.'

(Yes, it *was* late. But an urgent telegram—Lavinia? She'd want to know what it was—at that time of night too.)

'—forgive me, won't you? I know you will. You love me, don't you? Doesn't our love matter most? I'm sorry to disturb you. I wouldn't have done it for worlds, only—'

'Oh, Jack, is it? Well, how *are* you? Haven't heard from you for a long time. When did you get down? What? Can't hear very well—telephone's not very distinct to-night. You're not staying? What a pity! I should have liked you to come out—'

'Frank, listen to me—what's the matter? Can't you talk to me? . . . Is there anyone there? . . . All right, I'll do the talking. But you've got to answer me. You can do it in yes and no if you like, but listen—'

'Who's Jack, dear?'

'Oh it's all right' (hand over mouthpiece) 'love. Jack Mc, McMasters. Down from the country. Only got a night in town. Chap I knew at school. Wanted to speak to me—'

'Yes, dear. It's not private, I hope? I mean—do you want me to—?'

'No, of course not. I couldn't think of it. Hold on, Jack. Just a moment. No, stay there, dear. It's all right. Go ahead Jack, I'm listening.'



'Frank, you haven't heard a word I said. And it's *so* important too. What *is* the matter? Can't you talk to me? Can't you *listen*, even? Don't you want to listen to me? Don't you want me any more?'

'Of course, de—*Jack!* Of course! Delighted to hear from you. Wish I could see you. How are you, old chap? Now go ahead. Tell me what's troubling you.'

'I'll tell you what's troubling me, Frank. I'll tell you soon enough. Though I suppose it won't trouble *you!* *Jack!* . . . Darling can't I talk to you, just for a minute? I haven't seen you since Wednesday and it's such a long time till to-morrow. I *had* to ring you. I *had* to speak to you. What's the matter? Won't you listen? Please, darling, please——'

'Yes of course: I'm listening. 'Phone's not very good. What about ringing again. Clear the line. Try it? . . . All right then, off you go——'

'Frank, you're very nervous to-night. You hand's shaking, holding the receiver.'

'Oh I'm all right, Lavinia. All right. Don't worry! Don't—I'm *all right*. Just a bit unexpected, dear——'

'Oh, Frank! You called me dear! You *must* love me! Say it again, please darling. Say darling. *Say* it! I want you to! . . . Won't you? Oh please! Say it—darling. *Darling——*'

'Shall I take the call for you, Frank? You look so pale.'

'No. Go away. I mean—no. No, it's all right. All *right*, I said. I'm all right. I wish you'd leave me alone—no, not *you!*'

'Yes, dear. . . . Frank, that's not a man.'

'Yes it is! It's Jack! Jack, I tell you.'

'Jack who?'

'Jack O'—Jack——'

'McMasters, I think you said.'

'Oh yes of course, Jack McMasters. Fool I was to forget. Hullo, Jack, Jack McMasters—nearly forgot your name—(what am I saying?). Truth is, there's a bit of confusion here—how about ringing later?'



'I won't! You're trying to talk to someone else at the same time. Well, that someone else can wait, see? Wait till I've finished. It's a woman, I suppose. A woman in your flat. A nice thing, when you're supposed to love me. But of course you don't love *me*! I'm just the girl you picked up! Just someone to take out, and fool around with. Well, you're going to hear something that'll change that. Frank——'

'Darling, you must stop that conversation. If you drop the receiver like that it'll break——'

'So, and what are you going to do about it? *I* can't deal with him. After all he's still my——Frank! Frank! You haven't been listening! Are you there? Say something! Talk to me! Anything! Frank! Frank! Frank!'

'Hullo—yes—oh hullo—still there? Thought you'd gone—dropped the receiver—terrible fool to-night.'

'Oh you dropped the receiver, eh? Sure she didn't take it from you? Is she listening to me telling my little story? Howd's she like it? Like it again? Well listen, you—blonde, listen to me. I'm Frank's lover, see? Frank loves me. If he's got you there, it's not because he loves you. He loves *me*. All right? Got that? Now get this. Frank——'

'Frank I positively must do something——'

'Well go away, for God's sake, and let me talk. I can't get a word in edgeways, you're chattering all the time. Leave me alone, will you? Get out! Leave me alone!'

'Frank! You're not yourself. Something's wrong. . . . All right. I'll go. But let me have a word with Jack. I don't like his upsetting you like this. It must be something serious. I'd like him to tell me—that is, of course, if it's not strictly private. You said it wasn't.'

'How do you like it? Like it over again? And another time? Nobody's going to take Frank away from me. Get that, you blonde!'

'Oh! Oh!'

'Frank!'

'Frank!'

'Jack, listen. Can you hear me distinctly? Yes? Say yes!'

'Yes, Jack can hear you, darling! So can blondie! And Jim will too! What are you going to do then? Answer me! Frank!'

'It's quite impossible, Jack. I couldn't think of it. No, you mustn't hope to get me involved in schemes like that—go away Lavinia! No, quite impossible. You'd better go back where you came from! I can't have old friends taking advantage of me like this. Go back to your hu—home—anywhere—but go to blazes!'

'Now look what you've done! And I was expecting a call too!'

## PREFACE TO A LETTER FROM BABEL.

**Rustum Beg  
gentles  
the  
Wind-foal.**

A wild ass flings sand in the jaws of the lion.  
Whereupon these words wing from the watchers:  
But a little fleeter, that one,  
and the eagle too is blinded!  
Well does he merit the title, Wind-foal.

Then came Rustum Beg with a peerless running noose.  
Ten thousand spells of cunning and a mastery  
had been woven between its plaited strands.  
Not of thongs, but of sand, was it woven  
(sand to encompass the sand-spurning wind),  
and by a demon of the desert.  
Thereafter, a miracle . . .  
the wild ass came galloping to call . . .  
but solely to the master-noose:  
for your horse of air still tosses dust-spurning heels  
at the lion in his sinewy might,  
making game of that king, and of the wolf, and of the  
Infidel.

**Samson  
smites  
foes  
with the  
jaw-bone of  
the Wind-foal,**

Of the Infidel? Say rather, of the Philistine.  
For the Philistines were slain in their tens of thousands  
by a hero armed with a magic weapon,  
a hero well-schooled in the most peculiar peculiarities  
of the wild ass, and of the little foxes that fire the corn,  
and of that sweetness which proceedeth from strength.

**nor does he  
neglect to  
couple his  
fire-bearing  
foxes.**

Ah, but today where shall one encounter a Samson?  
Or who shall open his gate to any child of Orpheus?  
Today, moreover, who shall with certainty tally:  
this the Philistine, that the Chosen of the Lord?  
Today will exact its full measure of Discrimination.

Which be my Mother and my brother?  
These?  
Can it be these, then?  
May one answer, paradoxically, ALL?

**Hanuman  
falls  
and the  
jaw-bone  
is  
shattered.**

There was a child with the face of a monkey and the  
heart of a god.  
Seizing his chance, one day he leapt from his Mother's  
arms.

Five yojanas into the air he sprang.  
Had he achieved a full seven in place of five,  
Lord Hanuman might indeed have blinded the eagle.  
Alas, he dropped like a stone to Earth;  
so, disjointing his magic weapon.

**Mauí  
Tiki-Tiki  
contrives  
therefrom  
a  
fishhook.**

There was another child whom his Mother bore  
with head screwed widdershins and protruding tongue.  
Him she cast and abandoned upon the waves,  
yet it chanced a nautilus embraced, and bore him to  
land.

This child found a fragment of the shattered Jaw-bone,  
and therewith he fashioned a fish-hook of mighty mana  
to drag from the ooze of ages a certain Long Sought  
Land.

Into the light of day he dragged it as a boon for the  
brown-skinned people.

But his brothers scored its true face with heavy club-  
marks.

Thereafter, it became indistinguishable from other  
greed-scarred lands.

**Gentled,  
the  
Wind-foal  
earns  
promotion,  
and works  
much  
magic in  
Egypt,  
enlisting**

There was yet another child that was born between  
an ox and an ass in a Byre,  
and was straightway set upon the back of the ass  
to be taken and hidden beyond Old Nile.

And the price of the sanctuary of that One, was the  
blood of forty infants,  
one named Herod having the rôle of villain in that  
piece.

This Child was guarded by the anchorites of the desert;  
for in Him they saw the Signs.



even the  
wolf and  
the  
jackal  
to squire  
the  
magical  
child.

Herod  
enacts  
his part,  
providing  
an  
uncouth  
head  
for a  
witch's  
platter.

Thus, in a certain light, at a certain hour, were  
observed

in the pupils of the Child's eye two little Fishes,  
one of Silver, and one of Sable, yet twins.

And the sable twin was caught upon the prongs of a  
Bronze Trident,  
a bronze trident that was yet the foot of a Golden  
Crane.

Moreover, for yet another sign,  
the jackal came to worry, and, with him, the wolf to  
devour;

yet both remained to lick bond-breaking hands;  
nor would they ever after suffer severance from their  
Lord,

save over their smashed and trampled bodies.

Thus, all adown a steep and narrow way,  
they squired a dreaming Child.

At a canyon's end a shadow hovers,  
for there lurks one with a sword.

This one bears orders in mind and pay in pouch.

This one draws pay in advance  
and is faithful after his fashion.

This one thumbs his wages as he waits.

Then, a dry reed snaps . . . arms tauten . . . a  
pebble rattles. . . .

Thereafter, a snarling, and snapping of fangs,  
and a mighty rushing of wind, and a blinding down-  
ward stroke.

And, behold, the Child walks on into the Light beyond  
the Shadow,

and into flowery meads beyond the canyon;

but the head of a hairy man leaps from spouting  
shoulders,

and a dawn-pearl dove descends to bathe feet and beak  
in the blood of two faithful squires.

Thereafter, the Bird sought and found a New Ark.

Thereafter, the Child walked magically crowned,  
as with fluttering dawn-pearl wings and the blood-red  
fruits

of the desert Thorn.

Thereafter the mimer of murder sat down to count his  
wages,

whether they had been well earned:

for his part in the piece was done,

and his miming was ended for yet a little while.



Re-enter  
the  
Wind-foal,  
precoursing  
three rood  
companions,

There was an ass's foal tethered to an Olive Tree . . .  
*Woman, what have I to do with thee?* . . .  
And the Pilgrim's Way rings with wild hosannas . . .  
Thereafter,  
three trees on a mound . . .  
and the fruit thereof . . .  
a jackal, a wolf, and a Dove.

*And the last shall be first.*

—and a  
cursed and  
companionless  
rood.

Thereafter,  
yet another tree that grows wryly in a potter's field,  
and the fruit thereof shunned by the very ravens;  
and, from its heart, when rotten-black, the tumbling of  
Thirty Silver Seeds.  
Thereafter,  
the waxing of tares,  
and the choking of Potter's Acre.

Though his  
jaw is still  
shattered  
and scattered,  
we shall  
hear yet  
again  
from the  
Wind-foal.

These be strange wives-tales.  
Who would pause to consider a wives-tale,  
lest he lose ground in the race,  
to be classed with that dog whose lust for small deer  
outrules his slightest claim to preferment?  
Nevertheless in Hell, other values pertain.  
For the hound with one red ear all deer are warrantable,  
save the cattle of the Byre Adamic.  
Wherefore all these and other warnings  
counsel care on the part of the bearer of tidings  
between the Granges of Pluto and the Cornfields of  
Demeter . . .  
care, and care, and care again.  
Yet, and in despite of all this, there shall come a  
mandate.  
A correspondent shall be advised as to the conveyances  
desired:  
our part, to await the same.

PETER HOPEGOOD.

May, 1939.

## THE NEED FOR CRITICISM.

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### The Australian Tradition.

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By N. BARTLETT.

---

THE most uncritical admirer of Australian literature could scarcely maintain with justice that this country has yet produced a master spirit fit to rank with the creative geniuses of older civilisations. Nevertheless, Australian letters constitute far more than a minor branch of English literature as a whole. The Australian is different from the Englishman. He is a product of a history and a natural environment different from English history and English environment. "We have grown up in a crude, remote country and that has made us different from men who have grown up in London or New York", says Brian Penton. "There's no getting away from the difference. We can only belie and betray it." Our bitter, rather sardonic, sense of humour is no mere accident, but the legacy of ancestors who came up against life in the raw and laughed as men at the cruel jests of fate, rather than collapsing into more appropriate tears. The Australian is casual and a gambler because for his father and his father's father, if not for him, failure did not mean destitution, but a spell in the back country "earning his tucker" until luck changed. The Australian fights against economic barriers because in a new country they have nothing of the seeming inevitability of social and economic barriers in older countries. He is a democrat because democracy is the natural political philosophy of a nation where a privileged class never had time to become embalmed in the social structure.

Australian literature, therefore, is not the pick of books written in or about Australia, but the revelation of that difference which has made political and social democracy so congenial to us as a people and a criticism of our complacency in accepting f.a.q. standards in moral, political and social affairs. Mary M. Colum, in her stimulating book "From These Roots" (Cape, 1938), suggests that when a literature is oppressed by dulness and mediocrity, unawakened to complete

awareness of life and its possibilities, something is needed which will arouse the people, or a section of them, to a state of self-criticism. "First of all", she says, "there is the necessity for giving them sufficient racial and national pride to make them stop swallowing whole other cultures; then, if the country has the materials of literature, they have to be shown where these materials lie." This, of course, doesn't mean that we should not feed our own cultural roots in the seed bed of other cultures. If anything, modern Australian literature shows too little of the influence of overseas culture and too much of overseas commercialism, debased romanticism and fourth-rate realism. With a knowledge of the literary and artistic values enshrined in other cultures the Australian writer needs to understand what Osbert Sitwell meant, in "Dickens and the Modern Novel", when he said: ". . . the more national an artist seems in his outlook and way of writing, the more he will appeal to foreigners, and so the more international, in the course of time, his fame will eventually become . . . every artist should . . . seek the expression most suitable to his country."

What Hartley C. Grattan described as the "tiny trickle of worth-while native literature" in this country does reveal something of the difference which has made political and social democracy congenial to us as a people. Just as the Australian exists as a national type—"individuals more boldly interested in life, quicker to take means to an end and to counter any new blow of circumstance" was how the late C. E. Montague described it—so Australian literature, in the works of Henry Lawson, Tom Collins, "Banjo" Paterson and the balladists, exists as a native evolution. This difference has not yet produced a rich and satisfying culture, but the seed has been set and it is only from our own soil that an indigenous culture can grow. There is, moreover, an Australian tradition, a spiritual evolution, traceable in our literature, a tradition of pioneering and radicalism sufficiently marked to constitute a national philosophy. We have, too, a countryside with unique atmosphere, ". . . an extraordinary, weird attraction" D. H. Lawrence called it. While we have these things there is no need to lament, as professors of literature

have been known to lament, our lack of ancient castles and folk mythology. It is true that an old and established civilisation is riper in cultural development than a young pioneering country which has developed in the age of passive entertainment. It is natural and right, however, that this environment should be vigorous in social criticism. And social criticism was, in the 90's, the stimulant of a vigorous literary upsurge. From the 90's onwards there has been growing up a school of writers who do interpret the basic human passions—the real stuff of prose literature—through Australian symbols. It is to these that we must look for the expansion of Australian literature.

Unfortunately, in their healthy desire to excel, as modern American writers have excelled, in social criticism, some Australian writers have confused social criticism with political credo's and narrow interpretations of historical evolution. Social criticism, if it is to be a successful literary stimulant, should be something far more than criticism of a particular government or a ruling class. It should be an attempt to make a people completely aware of itself and of its spiritual and cultural shortcomings. Sinclair Lewis's "Babbitt" and "Main Street" are not Marxist tracts thinly disguised as fiction (as is Jean Devanny's "Sugar Heaven", for instance), but revelations of a spiritual poverty far more extensive than the shortcomings of one class in the community. The American Royalist H. L. Mencken is as creative a critic of American life as Sinclair Lewis and far more so than the superficial Jack London. In England Anglo-Catholic T. S. Eliot is far more alive to the modern cultural and political wasteland than the Communist poets who so naïvely hymn the strong, silent revolutionary working class created by their own middle-class imaginations. If anything, the calm acceptance of mediocre standards and the belief that material prosperity is an end in itself have justified the criticism of Sir Hubert Wilkins that Australians are the poorest rich people in the world. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that a Soviet Republic in Australia, which promised opera and high-class literature for the masses, would be as widely acceptable as a Capitalist Democracy which



guaranteed cheap beer and regular race meetings. This is not a comparison of the two systems, but a reminder that the problems of modern society are not so simple as Communist critics imagine.

It cannot be too often emphasised that the quality of the human spirit behind a work of art, and the degree of perfection with which it is created, are the important factors in cultural criticism. Nothing is more deadening to real criticism than the assumption, consciously or unconsciously held, that the degree of "progressiveness" in a book or poem is any indication of its merit. Too often "progressive" means in accordance with our own prejudices and ideas of progress. That way lies censorship and the dead hand of totalitarianism. A literature is not healthy unless a Tory Dr. Johnson can sit cheek by jowl on the library shelves with a radical Tom Paine. It is true that criticism, literary or social, presupposes standards, but they need not be exclusive standards based on rigid moral and political factors. To have standards of comparison we need to drink deeply at the dams of overseas and old-world culture, but an Australian culture needs also to be deeply rooted in Australian soil. The trouble at present is that those who are well-versed in English and European culture are usually contemptuous of Australian literature, whereas those who hope to contribute towards Australian literature lack the cultural background which would give them a sounding-board for their own efforts. This fatal division results in a complete absence of critical standards.

In England, since the war, a new wind is stirring. At last young men are beginning to lead the reaction against the ten-years-old blight of Marxist standards. Repelled by the disillusion of the post-war writers, a school of young poets and novelists, searching an economic Utopia and international justice, came under the influence of the Russian Revolution and Marxist literary criticism, ignoring the warning of M. Julien Benda, in his *"La Trahison des Clercs"*, that by subordinating literature to narrow and specific political ends they would be responsible for a great betrayal of their true function of helping men to understand themselves and to live the full life. The shallowness of Communism as the herald of a new and

better world having been shattered by the narrow self-interest of Soviet statecraft and by the Soviet-Nazi pact, the search for a new philosophy has begun. Already a new critical journal, *Horizon*, has appeared in England with the avowed intention of clearing the ground for a progressive policy of reconstruction. And it makes no apologies for its belief that "writing is an art, that it is an end in itself as well as a means to an end, and that good writing, like all art, is capable of producing a deep and satisfying emotion in the reader, whether it is about Mozart, the fate of Austria or the habits of bees".

It is symptomatic of the change that is coming over English literature that Stephen Spender contributes a "September Journal" in which "with all humility" he chooses "the side of Chamberlain against Fascism" for the fundamental reason that he hates the idea of being regimented and losing his personal freedom of action, and that Cecil Day Lewis contributes a translation of 66 lines of the Fourth Georgic. Cyril Connolly, in his editorial comment, refers to the fact that Auden and Isherwood, "our best poet and our most promising novelist", have gone to America, and points out that their flight is also "a symptom of the failure of social realism as an aesthetic doctrine". He says that by abandoning what they consider to be the sinking ship of European democracy they condemn, by implication, the aesthetic doctrines of social realism which had been prevailing there. All this is a warning and an example to Australian writers. The inheritors of the true cultural tradition will be those who realise that social criticism has the task of protecting men from the tyranny of things and the dictatorship of the specific. The true revolutionaries of this age are not those who help forward the inevitable evolution towards collectivism, whether socialist, Fascist or capitalist, but those who fight for the rights of man against the machine and machine-like social organisation.

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## AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE, 1939-40.

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By H. M. GREEN.

---

*In 1939 appeared the first of these articles, dealing with Australian literature during 1938. Since, owing to the writer's illness, nothing appeared last year, this is a double article, covering the years 1939 and 1940 taken together. In future it is hoped to publish a similar article annually.*

CONSIDERING everything, Australia's literary production during the two years here dealt with has been very satisfactory. It is true there has been no new novel as striking as Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*, and no new book of prose or verse as good as FitzGerald's *Moonlight Acre*. But Kenneth Slessor's *Five Bells*, small though it is, stands out over other recent books of verse, and in verse again there has been an interesting renaissance of Australianism, springing from roots quite different from those of the nineties, whose principal centre is the South Australian Jindyworobak Club. Meanwhile in prose there have been two outstanding novels, Leonard Mann's *Mountain Flat* and Patrick White's *Happy Valley*, as well as a book of short stories, Frank Davison's *The Woman at the Mill*, which is the best collection of its kind since Katharine Prichard's *Kiss on the Lips*.

Kenneth Slessor, now Commonwealth War Correspondent, is the most modernistic of our established writers of verse. The first book in which he found himself, *Cuckooz Contrey* (1932), was memorable, and in *Five Bells* there is no falling off. Intellectual, satiric, with a capacity for enthusiasm which forces its way now and then through the dry disillusioned surface of his verse, Slessor has also a remarkable faculty for imagery. There have been five other books of verse by established Australian poets. Baylebridge's *This Vital Flesh*, although not new, is important, since it collects several early works which are now practically unobtainable, together with a preface and addenda outlining the philosophic principles by which they are animated. Of Hugh McCrae's *Poems*, about

two-fifths are new to book form, and although the best have appeared before, everything McCrae writes is worth reading. Mary Gilmore has added one more to her long series of books of verse; *Battlefields* shows all her old width and depth of sympathy, and here and there, as in *Rattle-Rattle-Rattle* or *The Complaint*, there is a poem that would have made one prick one's ears if it had been by another writer. In *Galahad*, *Selenemia and Other Poems*, C. R. Jury has published, or in some cases republished with alterations, verses which are reminiscent of the romantic age in English literature, of the romantic Shakespeare, of Greece and of Keats's Greece, and which contain chords of beauty that sound strange against the harder music of to-day. Finally, in *Purple and Gold*, a repeated title, there have been republished, with additions, the lyrical verses of the late F. S. Williamson, a minor but melodious Victorian poet of the nineties.

One of the most interesting of the two years' books of verse was written by an American professor. Australian born and brought up, Professor Ernest Moll retains a fondness for this country, and during a recent stay here he wrote most of the contents of *Cut from Mulga*. Moll has been accused of being "Frost-bitten". The influence of Frost is obvious, and Moll's verses have a curiously hybrid tone, with their American influences and occasional Americanisms, along with their sincere Australian feeling. But Moll shows a certain sympathetic kinship with his old friend, the late Professor Brereton, his restraint and irony remind one of Vance Palmer, and he is a genuine poet, with a considerable amount of skill.

The Jindyorobak Club of Adelaide matters more by reason of the movement it has started than of the actual verse—though a little of this is notable—that its members have turned out. They believe it is time for the development of an Australian culture arising out of a feeling of kinship not merely with the soil and what springs directly from it, but also with that as reflected in the original inhabitants of the country, their attitude, their beliefs, their mysteries. The leader of the group, Rex Ingamells, has published several booklets of verse, of which the latest and best, *Memory of Hills*, comes within the sphere of the present article. Whatever



may come of this mystical harking back, Ingamells' latest verses represent a definite achievement. Hard, clear-cut, and satiric when they leave the countryside, they are individual and sincere. Ian Mudie (*Corroboree to the Sun*), like Ingamells, specialises in the Jindyworobak doctrine, and attacks "mental expatriates" and the "whimpering end" of Eliot. Of the other members of the Club, Flexmore Hudson and Max Harris write plays, or poems in the nature of plays; the shorter verses of Hudson's *In the Wind's Teeth* are influenced by Chinese and Japanese forms, and Harris (*The Gift of Blood*) reflects a number of modernistic European influences which he has not quite digested. Ingamells has edited a couple of *Jindyworobak Anthologies*, which however reach out to other Australian States and exponents of other than Jindyworobak views. Queensland has followed South Australia with two issues of *Meanjin Papers*, which agree with the Jindyworobak Club in so far as they recognise the need for an attempt at a better and more natural realisation of the Australian background. The Queensland poets include Brian Vrepont, Paul Grano and also James Devaney, who as a romantic seeker after unknown beauty seems a little out of place in this galley. A poet who fits in far more appropriately is the Western Australian, Paul Hasluck, at least in that part of *Into the Desert* which justifies its name. Then there is a small group of Victorian poets, some of them members of the Melbourne Bread and Cheese Club, whose booklets have been published mainly by small local presses. Mary Finnin's second book, *Look Down, Olympians*, has the same severe, unlyrical and rather bitter quality as her first. W. A. Morison is interesting not because of the flattering introduction by Hugh McCrae, whose generous heart can perceive a cygnet in any duckling, but because his best verse mingles thought and fancy with some technical skill. And Garry Lyle, who has a certain kinship with the Jindyworobaks, reflects (like Mary Finnin) some of the horror of war in the farewells of

boys one knew at school  
grown suddenly old and serious, shaking hands  
on final leave; the smarting, sick despair  
beneath the greasepaint courage of their girls.

In New South Wales there has appeared a "Prelude Series of Australian Poems"—four tiny booklets, of which the most interesting is Dorothy Auchterlounie's *Kaleidoscope*, a sharp and amusing satire on modernity and Sydney, including its

Harbour bridge so high

Like a coat-hanger in the sky.

Finally, in two little books by the lady who calls herself "Rickety Kate", there are verses of very human and at the same time genuine poetic quality, whether they deal with the dawning that comes

Rose-flushed, in a lovely hurry.

or with the modern girl or the cicada.

With the publication of *The Woman at the Mill* it becomes clear, if it wasn't clear before, that Frank Davison is among the two or three leading Australian short story writers of to-day. He has learned much from Vance Palmer, but though he has not Palmer's scope or art, and indeed practically all his stories belong, formally, to the same type, he is less remote than Palmer; one rubs shoulders with his men and women, and they are full of vigorous individual life. Of the two outstanding novels, both deal with the countryside, White's *Happy Valley* with a small town and Mann's *Mountain Flat* with an out-of-the-way farming township. Also, both are realistic, and both emphasise the gloomier side of things. But here the resemblances end. White, who though he lived in Australia from babyhood until he was thirteen, has spent the rest of his life overseas, reflects the current literary influences, in particular that of Joyce, in a manner that shows they have not yet been thoroughly assimilated, and his style is self-conscious here and there. Nevertheless in reading the book one feels oneself in the presence of reality, though it is cosmopolitan rather than Australian. Curiously enough there is little that is distinctively Australian about *Mountain Flat* either, though Mann was born and has lived here all his life—except for overseas service with the old A.I.F. This may be in part explained by the mixture of races that inhabit his tiny township, left over from the mining days. *Mountain Flat* is Mann's best novel, and one of the best published in this country in recent years. It is organised, compact, full of

people each of whom is thoroughly realised, and in its little farming society, both the hard and dusty everyday which is the background and the streaks of passion which glow through it are genuine, and the last are intense.

Of the other novels, Kylie Tennant's *Foveaux*, which is set in Surry Hills and Woolloomooloo, is a little disappointing in the light of her first novel, *Tiburon*, and her third, which belongs to 1941. Better constructed than *Tiburon*, it is too tightly packed, gives one an impression of having been built of material acquired in too short a time, so that the writer has not been able to select and generalise. Nevertheless one would not like to have missed it. Frank Walford's *And the River Rolls On* begins with a vigorously realistic and quite disillusioned treatment of life in a small Hawkesbury township, but winds up as a mediocre detective story. In *Framed in Hardwood*, Eric Lowe, whose *Salute to Freedom* was mentioned in the preceding article, has written a much shorter and better organised novel, which however trails off disappointingly into melodrama. Miles Franklin and Dymphna Cusack's *Pioneers on Parade* is an amusing, though rather long and loosely written, satire on this State's sesquicentenary celebrations and celebrators, some of whom certainly deserved satirising. There have also been several historical novels of the pioneering days, and in particular J. J. Hardie's *Pastoral Symphony* and Roy Connolly's *Southern Saga*.

Katharine Prichard's Australianism is a modernised version of that of the nineties, but without their sentimentality and parochialism, and this shows in her play, *Brumby Innes*, which won a prize given by the now dead *Triad* magazine in 1927. This play is easily among the best that Australia has produced. It is set in the north-west of Western Australia, and deals with the old problem of white man and black woman—plus white woman. But it represents a new version of the problem, which indeed is no problem to Brumby Innes, a strong—and unpleasant—character in the midst of weaklings. Katharine Prichard is not afraid of facts, of life, of outright statement; her characters are real, and the denouement is, one feels, exactly as it would have been in life. Nevertheless,

one also feels that good as it is, the play needs gripping together, that it somehow lacks a focus.

Professor Murdoch, that most open-minded and liberal of Tories, has produced yet another collection of essays, *The Spur of the Moment*, throughout which he retains the charm and personality that have kept him in the forefront of British essayists, along with the touch of sermonising which presumably can't be helped, and is at least not made over-obvious. Of an entirely different kind are the essays on life and living in which Professor Wood Jones continues along the line of Huxley (not Aldous) and his modern successors, differing from the essayists pure and simple in that his main aim is the conveyal of information, but conveying it in such a manner that one feels his work belongs to literature as much as to science. Here may be mentioned also Vance Palmer's *National Portraits*, historical sketches which recall those of Marcus Clarke, though Palmer surpasses Clarke in artistry as much as he fails to reach him in power. If these essays represent journalism rather than literature, it is journalism of a high order. *Apartment in Brussels*, by Alan Mickle, an essayist of the chatty variety, may also be mentioned, since he lives part of the time in Australia, and makes a point of being Australian.

Finally there is the huge two-volume work of reference, *Australian Literature from its Beginnings to 1935*, by Professor Morris Miller of Tasmania, which has been vastly improved and elaborated from a first sketch by the late Sir John Quick. Lacking a little in critical perspective, this work is nevertheless loaded with information and is invaluable to any student of Australian literature.

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### MAN.

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A shadow shaking on the grass,  
 A shadow floating in the stream,  
 A shape upon a clouded glass,  
 The murmur of a broken dream.

Less shall he be upon his earth,  
 And all his works before the sun,  
 When with his tears, his tricks, his mirth,  
 His very shadow is unspun.

"E."



## A CHINESE NOVEL.

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*The Chin P'ing Mei.\**

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By R. ORMSBY MARTIN.

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THERE are two main characteristics of the Chinese novel. Above all things, it is concerned with telling a story as a story. The *Chin P'ing Mei* provides an excellent example of this characteristic. The story of Hsi Men, his Six Wives and his Etceteras is told in a realistic and detailed manner—there is no preoccupation with the plot and no psychological “intensity” to be found in it. It moves along like an enormous, varied, and extremely witty procession. Though it is primarily a story, the chief characters stand out in strong relief from the host of lesser ones—the gay unprincipled, but kindly, Hsi Men; the strong, austere Wu Sung; the man-crazed Gold Lotus and the dignified, lovable Moon Lady. All the characters, great and small, are amazingly alive, but they live through their actions, and not through comment.

The second main characteristic of the Chinese Novel is that it was never considered to have any literary (or moral) value. Scholars, at least openly, would have nothing to do with it, for their reputation would have been ruined by such a connexion. Neither the drama nor the novel could possibly improve the morals of the people or of society, and moral improvement was, reputedly, the constant aim of the officials. Hence the novel was officially condemned as what we might call “immoral and subversive” literature. It is not surprising, then, if the *Chin P'ing Mei*, as all Chinese novels, had a chequered career. At one time only one manuscript is said to have survived the censor. It was not till the present century that it was openly published.

The chief value of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, however, lies in its portrayal of the life and manners of the Ming Period, 1368-1644. Lin Yutang considers that it is “probably the best

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\* Abridged translation by Arthur Waley. The Bodley Head. London, 1939, 852 pp. Full translation by Clement Egerton, *The Golden Lotus*. Four vols. Routledge, London, 1939.

novel of social manners in its ruthless and vivid portrayal of common characters, the gentry and the 'local rich', and particularly of the position of women in Chinese society of the Ming period." Here can be found graphic pictures of the household of a wealthy merchant, of the judicial and governmental system of Imperial China, of business life, as well as of the Festivals of the Chinese Year, and other social customs. Take, for example, this description of the Feast of Lanterns:

The Lantern Market, with its dozens of crowded stalls, opened from the street in front of the house, and like two turbulent mountain torrents the throngs of holiday-makers came streaming from east and west along Lion Street. What a varied spectacle it was! What a gay profusion of shapes and patterns was displayed by these splendid lanterns, some for sale, hanging in rows in the stalls, some on tall staves and poles, serving to decorate the square, some carried by the people, in the hand or at the end of a stick, like miraculous blossoms or great luminous pearls—all hovering and gliding through the black crowds in a magical, ceaseless ebb and flow. . . .

All classes of society were represented among the frequenters of the market, from the bored young aristocrat who impatiently stamped his foot when further progress through the crowd was impossible, to the gaily-dressed patrician wives and daughters who walked sedately, hand in hand, and fled from the turmoil to the upper stories of the adjacent tea-rooms, . . . Of course, the usual fortune-teller was not lacking, offering to predict for the passers-by, from the form of the clouds or the conjectures of the stars, what luck the new year would bring; nor the down-at-heel student, who, raised above the crowd, recited poems and stories; nor the wandering monk, . . . nor the itinerant baker with stacks of New Year pancakes; nor the dealer who offered for sale dry branches covered with artificial peach-blossoms; nor any of the other queer characters who are accustomed to throng a New Year's market.

Thus from the historical point of view, the *Chin P'ing Mei* is of unique value.

Because of its sexual element the *Chin P'ing Mei* is often called the Chinese *Decameron*. A much better comparison in European literature would be Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Both are historical documents of the highest value, both contain many reflections on moral philosophy, and on the futility of the actions of the various characters. Again, the *Chin P'ing Mei* ends with the triumph of virtue, for at the close Moon Lady alone survives the debacle. The book is rounded off by the

following poem, which sufficiently attests the purpose of the author, whoever he may have been:

Scan our whole story briefly, asking what it meant:  
 Event, we see, is strangely echoed by event.  
 A dissolute man of power dies long before his time,  
 A bold insidious rogue is snared in his own lime.  
 Spring Plum and Lady Ping are each vouchsafed a son,  
 But soon, though fortune shines, their earthly race is run.  
 Jade Fountain's and Moon Lady's is a brighter page:  
 Theirs the reward of virtue—peace and honoured age.  
 Gold Lotus? Hers a fate for shuddering and tears!  
 But this tale's fragrance will outlast a thousand years.

### BLAKE'S "THE MENTAL TRAVELLER."\*

By L. H. ALLEN.

OF these verses, cryptic even for Blake, Foster Damon says: "We need not wonder at the number of interpretations which have been applied to this poem." Among those he gives, his own and that of W. M. Rossetti take first place, and they are complementary.<sup>1</sup> Foster Damon relates the poem to the life of the individual as a symbolical rendering of the five stages of the Mystic Way.<sup>2</sup> W. M. Rossetti regards it as describing "the career of any great Idea or intellectual movement—as, for instance, Christianity, chivalry, art, etc., represented as going through the stages of (1) birth, (2) adversity and persecution, (3) triumph and maturity, (4) decadence through over-ripeness, (5) gradual transformation, under new conditions, into another renovated Idea, which again has to pass through the same stages."

Just as the embryo recapitulates the course of evolution, so the individual sums up in his life the career of a culture. Rossetti and Foster Damon, therefore, give different aspects of the same thing.

I cannot do more than attempt an excursus on these interpretations, by stressing certain analogies with *Tiriel*. It may be regarded as partly an epitome, partly a complement, of that poem.

#### Stanza 2.

The "babe" is a new era. (Blake is thinking primarily of the "new heaven" he proclaimed, begotten by the agony of the French

\* Text, Geoffrey Keynes (Nonesuch Press, 1932). This is a supplement to my article on *Tiriel* in *The Australian Quarterly*, June 1940.

<sup>1</sup> William Blake, *His Philosophy and Symbols*. S. Foster Damon, Constable, pp. 129 ff.

Thomas Wright (*Life of William Blake*, 1, 158): says: "The best explanation is that of Mr. Damon", whom, in the main, he follows, though with a variant view of stanzas 14-20.

<sup>2</sup> John Sampson (*The Poetical Works of W. Blake*, Clarendon Press) also relates the poem to the individual life. It is "a picture of man's spirit passing through successive mental states". (Edn. 1905, p. 273.)

Revolution.) Moreover, all begetting is Generation, which in itself is a sorrow (cf. *Tirzah*). None the less, joy attends the birth because Generation has the potentiality of Regeneration.

#### Stanzas 3-5.

The new fertile thought is the son of a "woman old", the feminine conceptual, fixative principle. The "rock" symbol has various significances, suggesting something hard, unfeeling, infertile—abstract Reason (Urizen) and "Druidic" religion, which sacrifices genius to petrified system.

From another aspect Woman is Virgin-Matter, fixative of Time's energy, but here so fixed as to oppress the new enlightenment. This, too, is the stage of a culture when matter dominates it.

#### Stanzas 6-7.

A regeneration ensues. Convention cannot resist the fire of genius. The "rock" melts and re-forms. The woman imbibes the youth's vitality, rejuvenates, and, from oppressor, becomes lover. Thus she becomes fertile, and the arts multiply. This is the flower of the culture, when Matter and Idea are in equipoise.

#### Stanzas 8-10.

This is the *Tiriel* stage, but a picture complementary to that of the longer poem. In the latter we saw the old man's anger and despair; but here we see a stage before his palace has crumbled. He has the gems of love, but only as a memory of spiritual fruition. With that is blent the "nostalgia for the Absolute".

It is the good side of decadence, matter worn through by Spirit, but touched with the sadness of the unregained Source. What is left to Tiriel becomes his largess to men, who, however, no longer abide in the living equipoise of Art, always seeking, like the decadent Athenians, "something new".

Melancholy attends this stage. Spirit is not satisfied with dominating matter; it wants to forget it. Plotinus, Porphyry tells us, was ashamed that he was in a body.

But it has an autumn loveliness. Myratana is dying, not yet dead.

#### Stanzas 11-13.

Just as there was born a boy who is to resist an old woman, so now a girl is born who is to resist an old man. The preceding stage—mystic yearning for the eternal—begets a new conceptual potentiality.

She will have none of old Tiriel. She is a new Enitharmon (Inspiration) seeking a new Los (Poetic Genius).

#### Stanza 14.

This is the stage of Tiriel, "blind, old, and lonely". There is a difficulty in stanza 15 since it is not clear to whom "her" refers. Is it to the maiden of the preceding stanza, or the female babe? I am inclined to think they are doubles of each other. The "babe" is the conceptual potentiality, the "maiden" the source of emotional response to it.

#### Stanzas 15-17.

Fermentation precedes integration. The cosmos goes into the melting-pot; and the effect is analogous with that of Tiriel's curse. Old values become chaotic, and the senses cannot trust themselves. This is what Blake means by "the flat earth becomes a ball". He denied that the earth is spherical, probably because, since he had fourth-dimensional sight, three-dimensional objects appeared flat to him when he used that power. Occultists assert that three dimensions have a kind



of flattened appearance to the four-dimensional eye. He means, therefore, that vision "through" degenerates into vision "with" the eye. Stanzas 18-19.

The counterpart of stanza 6. The young conceptual power rejuvenates the frozen senility, and they become lovers; for the "infancy" to which the old man is beguiled is not the state of Har and Heva, but that of young and glorious life facing the world to be new-created. Thus wonderfully does Blake render the everlasting interaction of the two primal powers—Time-Energy, Space-fixation; Masculine-active, Feminine-passive, in a wheel of reciprocal engendering. It takes us back to the *Phaedo*, where we are told that all things derive from their opposites.

This union of the new Los and Enitharmon is not that of mature culture, but of the inspirational dawn of Innocence, an infancy very different from the infantilism of Har and Heva.

This may be called the marriage made in heaven. It is the preparatory impetus that enables the wheel of Manifestation to come full circle.

But why are they in "terror and dismay"? It is not that they shrink from the task before them. They are infants "terrified at each other's beauty",<sup>1</sup> feeling a mutual awe, a shrinking at the excess of inward light which is to burst on the Dark Night of the world-soul, and which they see in each other's hearts. (Laon and Cythna.)

Stanzas 20-21.

This is the descent of the soul's marriage into Experience. The once united lovers are now engaged in the battle between Spectre and Emanation, alternating attraction and repulsion.

It is a fight both generative and destructive. The interaction of Energy and Conception replants the vanished values, but it is only a preparatory stage. Before another culture appears Earth has to feel that a babe is born, a new Saviour has appeared. (Possibly Blake adopted the Hierophant's cry in the Mysteries: *Holy Brimo has borne a sacred Child, Brimos!*)<sup>2</sup>

Stanzas 22-23.

Therefore, Enitharmon, wife of Los, must become his mother. Virgin Matter must conceive, and, by virtue of being Matter, must impose its Limitations. The pastoral atmosphere seems a kind of Bethlehem picture—a pre-sense of a new era.

To put it in a happier light, the new Genius comes to destroy the old Convention, but only as being its progeny. It fulfils the law; it does not supplant. The "fulfilment" is completion, by eliciting from old forms new significances. This is just what Blake did, for his language and ideas are intensely Biblical.

The thought is happy. It makes man's evolution continuous. The new stratum does not rest on a vacuum. All pre-history is its base.

Stanzas 24-25.

The babe is eventually to be a Prince of Peace; but that is not his beginning. He is a "frowning" babe<sup>3</sup> because he must first appear as a spirit of revolt. Tiriel is reborn as Orc.

Stanza 26.

So it is that Enitharmon, once the eternal bride of Los, then his phenomenal matrix, has to become his oppressor, and the Wheel of Generation again begins its round.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sampson, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jane Harrison: *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 549.

<sup>3</sup> "Like a fiend hid in a cloud", as Blake says of himself.

## BROUGHT TO BOOK.

## ANTHOLOGY AND MYTHOLOGY.

*Jindyworobak Anthology 1940*, edited by Rex Ingamells. (F. W. Preece, Ltd., Adelaide, 1940. 3s. 6d.)

*Thirteen from Oahu*, by Peter Hopegood. (Frank Johnson, Sydney, 1940. 5s.)

IF the name Jindyworobak still suggests to some a rather aggressive nationalism, a glance at the third edition of the club's anthology should dispel this impression. One occasionally feels, indeed, that poems such as "The Kookaburra" and "They Are No More" by John Opie betray too great an anxiety to foster local colour. More than one reader, too, will wish to break a lance with Ian Mudie when, in the "Echo of Alcheringa", he insists with some vehemence on our debt to aboriginal culture. On the whole, however, the collection preserves its Australian character without achieving an obtrusive distinction. A considerable number of poems is devoted to the description of natural scenes, and rarely have the more austere and desolate aspects of our land been better interpreted. Ian Mudie, for instance, captures the very tang of the open spaces:

Give my words sun and rain,  
desert and heat and mist,  
spring flowers, and dead grass,  
blue sea and dusty sky.

Equally memorable is the glimpse in Flexmore Hudson's "Drought"

of rock-holes where the brumbies slink  
like swift cloud-shadows from the gidgi-scrub  
to drink when the moon is low.

Nor have the poets been less successful in the difficult task of conveying human emotions through natural imagery. Thus, in James Devaney's "Song of Wawina", the love of the wild creatures for their haunts forms a convincing parallel to the captured woman's yearning for her own country; and in this connection no reader can fail to recall again the work of Flexmore Hudson, in the lines "To Edgar H. Mercer":

But now when the range is purple and the magpie sings,  
and the horses jog to water through a dust of gold,  
each galah coming home to our creek gum brings  
a longing to share with you this beauty as of old.

Australian life and scenes form the very essence of this poetry, yet its appeal is universal as well as national.

The most striking proof, however, that the contributors to the anthology are not the prophets of literary isolationism lies in the modernity of their outlook. Nearly all are well abreast of contemporary poetry in England and America. A strong intellectual element

distinguishes their work, for the poet, ill at ease in a universe which he can no longer interpret by conventional standards, expresses his own difficulties and misgivings, charging every line with significance. Typical of the mental unrest of our generation is Geoffrey Reading's "Impulse", in which he tries in vain to reconcile the conflicting aspects of the world he contemplates:

The synthesis of all these things escapes me.

In a similar vein Max Jenkins' "Man Picks His Scurried Way" contrasts the puny progress of humanity with the resistance of time, which is likened to a cliff towering overhead. Characteristic also of the contemporary approach to life is the dauntless realism and the emotional asceticism which mark many of these poems. Mr. Reading's line

The day stinks like any bilious woman's breath

surely provides the most revolting example, but for a more refined and subtle lowering of poetic intensity we must turn to Max Harris' "Acknowledgment" or to J. McAuley's "Envoi for a Book of Poems". Both these writers, indeed, with their sensitive feeling for words and their mastery of form, attain a unity and restraint not often equalled in the anthology.

It is natural, too, that the Jindyworobak poets should resemble their contemporaries in seeking a technique appropriate to the new outlook on life. Both Geoffrey Reading and Colin Thiele borrow from the symbolism of T. S. Eliot. James Picot, in "Lamps", employs with some address the sudden transitions peculiar to modernist method. The reader will also observe the variety of metrical experiments, ranging from the flexible rhythms of Paul Grano's "By Shorncliffe Beach" to the costive lines of Max Jenkins' "Man Picks His Scurried Way". No less conspicuous are the numerous efforts to quicken and enrich poetic diction, the most arresting of which is probably Brian Vrepont's poem "The Stoker".

Many of the contributors do not, of course, escape the faults attendant on the experimental character of their work. Not a few are open to the charges of obscurity, formlessness, and purposeless cacophony. But such defects are at least partly excused by the general merits of the anthology. These poets are clearly anxious to have done with outworn conventions and to evolve a technique adequate to express changing conditions and beliefs. One feels, moreover, that they have succeeded in crystallizing an essential element of their environment. The emotional restraint, the harsh metrical forms, and the hard outlines of the imagery seem somehow appropriate to a land so many of whose aspects are stark and forbidding.

More restricted in its appeal, though less startling in form and style, is *Thirteen from Oahu*, a slim volume of poems by Peter Hopegood. Oahu, we learn from an introductory note, is an Hawaiian word, meaning the Place of Setting Forth for the Isles of the Blessed,

and the poems, apparently, are intended to partake of its magical nature. Mr. Hopegood is a mystic, who believe that in any art, to quote the publisher's note, "all the essential symbols are unalterable, being actually psychological factors rooted in the very marrow of man's æsthetic mechanism". This view he seems to advance in a number of short essays (also contained in the volume) in which he attempts to trace correspondences between the myths of races as diverse as the Europeans, the Arabs, the Hindus, and the Polynesians. Such a subject could not fail to be interesting, and Mr. Hopegood points to some important resemblances, the most striking being the likeness between the English legend of the Three Men of Gotham and a Polynesian myth. His statements, however, are not always convincing, for, unsupported as they are by evidence, there is often little to show that the similarity he detects between racial mythologies is not fortuitous. Nor, save in the case of the Gotham legend, can it be said that the essays go far towards elucidating the poems. These are also based upon the myths of various races. Some, like "Dark Fabulist", which retells the Daphne story with an aboriginal setting, are quite readily understood, others require a knowledge of myths which few readers will possess. Nearly all, it may be added, are somewhat burdened by their dependence on esoteric lore. On the other hand, if we do not concern ourselves too much with the legends, we shall soon recognize in Mr. Hopegood a poet with a gift for sensitive description and limpid music. He uses with competence a variety of metrical forms, including blank verse, but he is perhaps best represented by the melodious quatrains of "From Beyond the Morning Sea":

Though bright the lances of the sun,  
the arrows of the moon  
can pierce to deeper silences,  
can trace an elder rune.

Though haunting sweet the sirens' songs  
from reefs that ring the Flood,  
Ah, sweeter far that singing Star,  
the bird on Eva's rood.

No less pleasing in its melody and exquisite in its grace and clarity is the conclusion of another poem:

Dreams reach their ends.  
Each dreamer wakes to see  
full moonlight on the lake  
beyond a cypress tree.

All who read these lines must wish that Mr. Hopegood would always be content to write as the poet rather than the student.

C. J. H. O'BRIEN.



## MODERNS—OLD AND NEW.

*Some Modern Writers: Two Courses of Sydney University Extension Lectures*, by Members of the Departments of English. (Australasian Medical Publishing Company, Sydney, 1940. 3s. 6d.)

CIRCUMSTANCES have long delayed the publication of three lectures delivered in 1938 by members of the Departments of English in the University of Sydney for the Sydney University Extension Board, but their appearance in print is none the less welcome. Together with three lectures which had previously appeared as *Some Recent Developments in English Literature*, they have been published under the title *Some Modern Writers*, the writers dealt with being Ezra Pound, Charles Morgan, and A. E. Housman (these three lectures appearing in print for the first time), James Joyce, Edith Sitwell, and T. S. Eliot.

In an introductory note to the lectures on Pound, Morgan and Housman, Mr. R. G. Howarth explains the connection between the members of what appears at first an oddly assembled trio. Pound's maxim, "Make it New", notes Mr. Howarth, has been observed by the other two writers, each of whom has also "contributed to the advancement of the art of verbal expression" (but what writer of importance has not done this?). All three can be considered modern, even though the degree of modernity varies.

Mr. Howarth's lecture on Ezra Pound does more than justice to a difficult subject. Pound appears here as a combination of the ultra-modern and the anti-modern; it might be expected that in his anti-modernism at least he would find many followers, but as this phase of his thought and feeling finds an ultra-modern form of expression the insuperable barrier of unintelligibility often cuts Pound off from his audience.

Mr. Howarth's discussion is confined almost wholly to *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (*Life and Contacts*) and the *Cantos*, relating these to Pound's life and development, with only passing reference to Pound as a leader of the Imagist and Vorticist schools. Further mention of his work with the Imagists would have been interesting, though undoubtedly the *Cantos* offer more than enough material for a lecture. Yet it may be that Pound will be remembered for some of the brief and wholly charming poems in his earlier volumes rather than for the immense and as yet shapeless mass of the *Cantos*.

The field for speculation that is opened up by the *Cantos* is almost unlimited, and many critics have approached it by various paths. Summing up, Mr. Howarth remarks that: "The common opinion seems to be that only parts of the poem can be read with pleasure, that it will not be entirely clear when it is finished, that in any case the most interesting thing about it is the method adopted." This leaves one wondering whether an unfinished poem that receives such qualified praise and nevertheless demands a great deal of time and thought

before even an imperfect understanding of it can be attained, really warrants all the commotion it has aroused. Should not "Who reads may run" be not only the first and second, but the last thought of the mere lover of poetry on "this formidable agglomeration of words"? Despite the elucidation Mr. Howarth offers, his own opinion does not appear to be far removed from this. It does not affect, however, the care he has devoted to his analysis of the *Cantos* in a detailed and penetrating study.

Mr. H. J. Oliver's lecture on Charles Morgan strikes a very different note. Morgan, he points out immediately, is not among those modern writers who have "a regrettable fondness for the fragmentary, the spasmodic and the incomplete", and indeed a greater contrast with Pound can hardly be imagined. Mr. Oliver deals with Morgan's three most important novels, the aspect which he discusses most fully being the predominance of theorizing to the detriment of art; but the discussion is somewhat disappointing, for full advantage is not taken of the opening which *Sparkenbroke* offers for criticism along this line. Although many sound and interesting comments are made in this lecture, one cannot help feeling at times that Mr. Oliver's vision of the wood is blurred by the clarity with which he sees the trees, the incidental merits and demerits which are not the whole of Morgan.

In his lecture on A. E. Housman, Mr. Ian R. Maxwell combines critical insight with charm of style. An understanding of Housman's personality is a necessary background for a study of his work, and Mr. Maxwell wisely opens his lecture with an explanation of the personal tragedy which so strongly coloured Housman's outlook. Those who doubt the sincerity of his pessimism might well be convinced after reading this, and those who doubt the quality of his work would also benefit from this clear and unassuming exposition of its merits. At a time when "simplicity" is almost a term of opprobrium and obscurity seems to be the aim of poets and poetasters, Housman's tense monosyllables come as a shock to readers who expect to find in him just another modern poet. But what a welcome shock! There is a timeless quality about the best of his verse which sets it apart from that of most of his contemporaries, a gift for a memorable phrase which was fostered by his classical studies. Without attempting to deny or conceal Housman's limitations, Mr. Maxwell indicates the qualities, among them *nerve*, *lilt*, and *tang*, which make Housman's three small volumes of verse an outstandingly distinguished contribution to modern poetry.

The three lectures here reprinted are on James Joyce, by Professor A. J. A. Waldoock; Edith Sitwell, by Mr. R. G. Howarth; and T. S. Eliot, by Mr. E. J. Dobson.

MARGARET WALKOM.

**"WILGATOWN."**

*The Woman at the Mill*, by Frank Dalby Davison. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1940. 7s. 6d.)

ALTHOUGH most of these fifteen short stories by the author of *Man-Shy* have appeared in print before, they do not gain by being collected together in one volume, since a certain sameness of characterisation and of treatment becomes apparent as we pass from one story to the next. This is partly due to the use of the first person, which Mr. Davison tells us in the Author's Note to this volume is "just a technical device, and one, it so happens, that I often find apt to my subject matter and comfortable to my idiosyncrasies". The reader might add that this is a device which makes the story seem unreal unless the author gives character to the narrator and makes him an integral part of the story; and it is in the author's failure to do this that the weakness of many of these stories lies.

All but three of the stories are concerned with the country around "Wilgatown" and with the people who have settled there. These people, on the whole, are the stock figures of Australian literature, the settler waiting for the drought to break, the old selector who lives alone, the grazier who was dispossessed by the mortgagees, and so on; yet suspense is well sustained and each story is given a twist which lifts it above the common level. Notable in this connection is "Further West", in which the problem of the white man married to a gin is handled with delicacy and restraint. The tragedy of the *mésalliance* does not become apparent to Dave Chandler until with his "stone age" wife and his half-caste family he moves to the new settlement at "Wilgatown", expecting gay social occasions and friendships. It takes the attraction which springs up between him and the widow, Mrs. Thorpe, only to be replaced by horror on her side when she hears of his domestic situation, to bring him to a realisation of the fact that for him and his family there is no place in the settlement; for their sake he must go "further west".

A certain self-consciousness is apparent in Mr. Davison's attempts to paint the Australian scene; these are very well done, in their way, but many of them have no artistic place in the context in which they appear, and give the impression of a duality of purpose in the writer's mind. A description of Australian flora, however charmingly done, is apt to retard the story and introduce a note of disharmony, unless it aids the development of plot or character. Because Mr. Davison's descriptions do not always do this we feel that he is brimming over with information which he must write down at any cost. For instance, this diffuseness spoils the story, "Blood Will Tell", which would have been a masterpiece of broad humour, had the author not introduced irrelevancies to bolster up the moral contained in the title.

On the other hand, one has nothing but praise for two of the stories in this volume, namely, "Lady with a Scar" and "The Woman at the Mill" (which gives the book its title). The former is the story of a man who meets a woman with a disfiguring scar on her face, and after some difficulty, recognises her as the little girl who had been his childish playmate, but until she tells him with hate and anger in her voice, does not remember that he himself had caused that scar. In his handling of this theme Mr. Davison reaches perfection. The device of the "switch-back" is employed with the best effect, and sincerity and feeling are apparent in every line. In "The Woman at the Mill" the author deals with the problem of the middle-aged woman, hungry for love, who dramatises herself, and the pathos of her awakening to a realisation of the very practical and quite unromantic reason for Bert Caswell's visit to her. These two stories could take their place in any volume of "Best Short Stories" because of their sincerity, insight into human nature, emotional integrity, felicity of phrase and technical skill. One eagerly awaits more work of this quality from Mr. Davison's pen.

LILIAN FLYNN.

### AN EDITOR'S ADVENTURES.

*The Great Wheel: An Editor's Adventures*, by C. Brunston Fletcher. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1940. 7s. 6d.)

MR. BRUNSDON FLETCHER begins his preface to "The Great Wheel" with the words: "These reminiscences are the best I can do in recalling the adventures of a long life. They remind me of a story about Thackeray read long ago. . . ." These sentences will give the intending reader a reasonably clear idea of the book: the word "reminiscences" will suggest that the aim here is not to advance any theory or draw any moral, but simply to tell of the interesting things that must happen in the life of any man who occupies for any length of time such a position of importance as the editorship of an influential newspaper; and the reference to the Thackeray story will serve to indicate that the method is discursive and that anecdote is frequent. One may quote the story of "the Highlander who was waiting in the Kirk to be married but who looked as if he were about to be hanged. His anxious best man asked what was the matter—had he lost the ring? He replied gloomily: 'No, mon, I've no lost the ring, but I've lost all ma enthusiasm.'"

If, then, the book is approached as its writer intends it should be, and there is appreciation of its diversity, there is good reading in the account by an eye-witness of such events as the disastrous Brisbane floods of 1893. Indeed, Mr. Brunston Fletcher is able to throw many sidelights on the early history of Brisbane and of Australia generally; as a surveyor and later as editor of *The Sydney Morning*



*Herald*, he had the opportunity of discovering more about most events than had the man in the street. The reader is impressed, too, with the writer's enthusiasm: "Every day has been a new day and something has always been happening. If one has the faculty of taking a real and abiding interest in things, whether they be dog-fights or earthquakes, the actual work becomes easy. Interest in the world's doings make good sauce for every job and gilds most disappointments."

The book will probably appeal most to those who, in the words of Sir Mungo MacCallum's Foreword, "have already some acquaintance of their own with the facts". Such readers will find a special pleasure in the method of throwing sidelights, and will not expect a more systematic account.

H. J. OLIVER.

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### SCHOOL SHAKESPEARE.

*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, edited with Introduction and Notes by Rev. Brother Gerard, M.A. (W. E. Smith Ltd., Shakespeare Head Press, Sydney, 1940, 2s. 3d.)

THIS edition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is planned solely as a school text-book for the Intermediate Examination; its interest is, therefore, purely local.

It is carefully edited with adequate glossary, rather too copious notes, which avoid academic detail, some valuable suggestions for school study, and a list of provocative questions for oral discussion and written exercise. A useful text-book for Intermediate candidates.

MARIE WALBERT.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### Australian English.

The Editor of *Southerly*.

Dear Sir,

I am very grateful for the opportunity you have offered me of replying to the reviewers of the pamphlet on Australian Pronunciation, published by the Association. I want mainly to thank the reviewers for the helpful and careful way in which they have chosen to treat the subject. The suggestions and criticisms contained in the reviews are gratefully acknowledged.

The brevity and incompleteness of the pamphlet, however, have naturally caused certain difficulties, and it may be desirable to deal further with these. The brief paragraph on the explanation of sound-change seems, for instance, to promise more than it fulfils (*University Union Recorder*, 25/7/40). It is intended only to emphasise in the most general way that sounds change because they are sounds, not because of climatic, psychological or pathological influences. No

attempt is made to explain particular sound-changes in detail. The reference to the disappearance of weak sounds is meant to emphasise the fact that sounds change because they are things apprehended by the ear. A weak sound disappears because it loses its character and prominence. Vowels change according to position and the influence of neighbouring sounds because a more powerful resonance will attract, absorb or weaken a less powerful resonance. Here, of course, we are dealing only with vowel-changes. Changes in consonants involve physiological influences, the general tendency to ease in utterance. But here again the ear must be taken into account. How otherwise can we explain the change of [x] to [f], for instance?

I cannot accept Mr. Hope's suggestion (*Recorder*, 25/7/40) that the symbols used are inadequate. The system used is in keeping with the practice of the International Phonetic Association. Symbols do not exist for every small variation of vowel quality, and it would only introduce confusion to invent them. The accepted practice is to allow each vowel symbol to represent not a specific sound, but a certain range of sounds. The exact sound indicated is marked on the Cardinal Vowel diagram (see D. Jones, *Outline of English Phonetics*, pp. 31-8). Unfortunately it was not possible to add this diagram to the pamphlet. It is not true, either, that "no satisfactory symbolic notation for intonation has yet been invented". Intonation is no longer a mysterious and elusive thing. It has been reduced to a system, and may be expressed by a remarkably accurate and simple notation.

Miss Symonds (*Southerly*, November 1940) rightly emphasises that the tendency to avoid long series of unstressed syllables operates in England as well as in Australia. Her gentle rebuke concerning the choice of examples must be admitted as justified. But I am still prepared to assert that those pronunciations are more common in Australia than in England, on the evidence of a general observation in both countries. I cannot follow her argument that the tendency to spelling-pronunciation is a tendency towards conservatism. Spelling-pronunciation may accidentally restore an older pronunciation, but it goes against tradition. Conservatism would retain the traditional pronunciation, traditional, that is, within the range of living speakers. There has been a tendency to change [p] to [ʌ] in *accomplish*. In Australia, I feel, this tendency has gone further than in England. The [ʌ] pronunciation may, on the authority of Daniel Jones, be rare in England, but I feel that it is still rarer in Australia. Finally, I do not think I have ever heard an Australian say [ev] for [av].

The distinction drawn between educated and popular speech, did not imply that the popular speech was "slovenly, careless and slipshod" (Jane Clunies Ross, *Australian Quarterly*, December 1940). The very opposite of this was emphasised. I do not agree that "those who try to speak well invariably copy the educated southern English". If some people do this, they are acting very foolishly. The educated



tradition of Australian speech is well established. The suggestion that a form of speech can be imposed on Australians or that their speech should be "standardised" is not scientific. The problems of speech-training in schools and the influence of films and radio, mentioned by Mrs. Clunies Ross, call for full investigation.

I do not share the competence of the *Bulletin* reviewer (11/9/40) to say when a speech sound is melodious and when it is not. To say that "The attack on accepted theories is interesting and is substantiated to some extent by phonetics" is like saying "The attack on the theory that the earth is flat is interesting and is substantiated to some extent by physics". On what authority are these theories dignified by the epithet "accepted"?

Yours faithfully,

A. G. MITCHELL.

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The Editors of *Southerly*.

Dear Sirs,

In last July's *Southerly* you ask for words used peculiarly, in speech or writing, by Australians. I have a few to offer, drawn from my reading of a prize novelist and a prized poet, for both of whom I have due respect. I think their use of these words very peculiar, and hope it is confined to Australia.

(1) "one of them seized a lubra and ravaged her." Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, 1938, p. 15. (Try "Thou still unravaged bride of quietness"!)

(2) "Oscar was appraised of the fact", p. 62. (It is "apprised" on p. 508.)

(3) "the National Government's vast and almost incredible callosity", p. 233 (? callousness).

(4) "bloody spittal", p. 408 ("to the spital go!")

(5) "accidently", p. 264, p. 575.

(6) "Between the conches of the Triton Kings." Hugh McCrae, *Poems*, 1939, p. 25. (A case of not being nose-conches?)

I am,

Yours vigilantly,

PEDANT.

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## NOTES.

A REVIEW, by Professor V. de Sola Pinto, of *Southerly*, Number One, appears in the Autumn 1940 issue of *English*, which has just been received here. The following extracts from the review will be of interest to readers: "*Southerly*, the new magazine of the Australian English Association . . . deserves a cordial salute from *English*. . . there is obviously an opportunity for a magazine which . . . is 'designed to interest all who read, all who attempt to write. . . .' The

first number of *Southerly* includes stories, critical essays, poems and reviews, all of which are sound pieces of craftsmanship and some excellent works of art. Dal Stivens's short story, 'Solemn Mass', A. D. Hope's incisive essay on 'Psycho-analysis and Poetry', and R. G. Howarth's own delicate little poems deserve special commendation. If this quality is maintained in subsequent issues, *Southerly* should have a distinguished future."

Number Three of *Southerly* is the subject of special mention in *Notes and Queries* for October 19, 1940. The Editor shows a particular interest in the new "Australian English" section conducted by Dr. Mitchell, and the specimen list of Australianisms given there is reproduced.

Further donations to the *Southerly* fund have been received from Miss L. Dunster, Mrs. J. Robinson and Miss Doris E. Wood, and are here gratefully acknowledged.

The Jindyworobak Club, of Adelaide, has kindly donated two copies of the *Jindyworobak Anthology 1940* (reviewed on page 28). These copies are for sale at 3s. 6d. each, and may be obtained from Mr. Howarth at the University.

By some oversight, the addresses given to the Association in November 1938 and November 1939 have not been mentioned in the respective reports printed in *Southerly* and also in *English*, Autumn Number 1940. The addresses were:

"Irish Memories and Australian Hopes", by Mr. Louis Esson,  
November 14, 1938.

"Swift", by Miss L. Flynn, November 27, 1939.

Apologies are here made to the speakers for these omissions.

Copies of Mr. H. M. Green's public lecture on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is the Shakespearian play prescribed for the Intermediate Examination this year, are still available from the Hon. Secretary, at 1s. each (postage 1d.).

Back numbers of *Southerly* may be obtained, at 1s. 6d. each (postage 1d.) from the Hon. Secretary or from Mr. Howarth at the University.

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